MAR 8 1995

#### STATE OF ARIZONA

### DEPARTMENT OF INSURANCE

Pro proper a property and		
DEPARTME	NLOF	INSURANCI
By	111	No. I Trade
1.7 V	110	

In the Matter of

COMMONWEALTH LIFE INSURANCE
COMPANY; FIRST GENERAL
INSURANCE COMPANY; and THE
TRAVELERS INDEMNITY COMPANY
OF AMERICA,

ORDER

Docket No. 8593

Petitioners.

The hearing in this matter took place on February 6, 1995. Commonwealth Life Insurance Company ("Commonwealth"), First General Insurance Company ("First General"), and The Travelers Indemnity Company of America ("Travelers"), collectively referred to as the "Petitioners", appeared through Michael Hensley and Robert Baldwin. Assistant Attorney General Patrick Irvine appeared on behalf of the Department.

The record of this matter consists of all pleadings, motions, testimony, and exhibits admitted during the hearing of this matter. From this record, Administrative Law Judge Gregory Y. Harris has prepared the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law, and Order for consideration and approval by the Director of the Arizona Department of Insurance (the "Director"). The Director adopts and enters the following Findings of Fact, Conclusions of Law and enters the following Order:

#### FINDINGS OF FACT and CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

### A. Background Discussion

1. Like many other states, Arizona imposes a retaliatory tax against insurers domiciled in jurisdictions that

assess taxes against Arizona domiciled insurers at a rate greater than the tax rate imposed upon insurers by Arizona. A.R.S. §20-230(A); Pacific Mutual Life Insurance Company v. Bushnell, 97 Ariz. 18, 21 at n. 1, 396 P.2d 253, 254 at n. 1 (1964) ("Pacific Mutual"); Metropolitan Life v. Insurance

Commissioner, 58 Md. App. 457, 459, 463 at n. 3, 473 A.2d 933, 934, 937 at n. 3. This statute provides that taxes imposed by a jurisdiction's political subdivisions constitute a tax of that jurisdiction. By accounting for all taxes imposed by another jurisdiction, the statute serves "to equalize taxation of insurance companies." Pacific Mutual, 97 Ariz. at 20, 396 P.2d at 254.

- 2. Commonwealth, a Kentucky domiciled insurance company, transacts insurance in Arizona. During the years at issue in this proceeding, Arizona domiciled insurers transacted insurance in Kentucky.
- 3. Kentucky has approximately 500 political subdivisions including cities, urban counties and counties. Kentucky law permits political subdivisions to assess taxes on insurance. Approximately 200 of these political subdivisions impose some form of tax on insurance, ranging up to 14%.
- 4. First General and Travelers, Georgia domiciled insurance companies at all times relevant to this matter, transact insurance in Arizona. During the years at issue in this proceeding, Arizona domiciled insurers transacted insurance in Georgia.
  - 5. Georgia counties may levy taxes on insurance.

0

3

5

3

5

- 6. In October, 1994, the Department issued notices to the Petitioners. These notices advised the Petitioners that consistent with the provisions of the April 5, 1994 Order entered by the Director (the "Kentucky Central Order") and the requirements of A.R.S. §20-230(A), the Petitioners' retaliatory tax liability had been calculated, or as applicable, recalculated. See In the Matter of Kentucky Central Insurance Company, et al., Docket No. 7760 (consolidated with Docket Nos. 8024, 8025, and 8083) ("Kentucky Central").
- 7. The Department has interpreted the Kentucky Central Order to require that any reassessments, in the absence of a rule stating another method, be based on the actual burden of local premium taxes on Arizona insurers doing business in the other state as determined by the "Survey Method." See
- 8. The Petitioners filed timely requests for hearing to challenge the assessments contained in the Notices issued by the Department. Because of the common issues presented by the Petitioners, the requests were consolidated for hearing.
- 9. This proceeding presents the question of whether the Department may consider the local tax burden faced by Arizona domiciled insurers in Kentucky and Georgia when calculating the retaliatory tax obligations of Kentucky and Georgia domiciled insurers. Also at issue in this proceeding is First General's refund claim for 1989 for which it had paid retaliatory taxes.
- 10. The Department had also issued a notice in October, 1994 to Bradford National Indemnity Company ("Bradford"). Initially, Bradford's challenge had been

5

consolidated with this matter. However, Bradford's tax liability has been resolved and an Order dismissing its appeal has been entered.

other Kentucky insurers and two New York insurers, none of which have any involvement in the resolution of the question of the Petitioners' retaliatory tax liability. Kentucky Central Life Insurance Company is currently in receivership. No reassessments have been issued to it or its subsidiary, Kentucky Central Insurance Company. No reassessments have been issued to Metropolitan Life Insurance Company or New York Life Insurance Company because no Arizona life insurers paid any local or regional taxes in the State of New York for the years at issue.

# B. <u>Discussion of Kentucky Central</u>

- 12. This proceeding represents a continuation of the Department's efforts in Kentucky Central to assess and collect retaliatory taxes owed by the Petitioners pursuant to A.R.S. §20-230(A). The Kentucky Central proceedings began in 1992.
- 13. This matter includes within its scope tax years that were not addressed in Kentucky Central, and also omits any effort to collect retaliatory taxes for other years:

	Kentucky Central	Docket No. 8593
Commonwealth	1986-1991	1989-1993
First General	1988-1991	1988-1993 (except 1989)
Travelers	1986-1992	1988-1993

14. The Kentucky Central Order did not terminate the proceedings related to the assessment and calculation of the Petitioners' retaliatory tax obligations. See Kentucky Central Order; see also A.R.S. §12-901(2) (definition of

3

"administrative decision"). That order specifically required that further proceedings be conducted to conclusively resolve the question of the extent of the Petitioners' retaliatory tax liability. These proceedings represent the culmination of the administrative process to resolve questions regarding the Petitioners' retaliatory tax liability for all years preceding 1994.

15. In Kentucky Central, the Director made findings on questions of law, many of which have been reurged by the Petitioners in this phase of the proceeding. These issues include questions of jurisdiction, the constitutionality of A.R.S. §20-230(A), whether estoppel prevents the Department from enforcing this statute, and whether this statute may be enforced without a rule. In relevant part, the Kentucky Central Order provided as follows:

#### CONCLUSIONS OF LAW

- 1. This matter is within the jurisdiction of the Director of the Arizona Department of Insurance pursuant to A.R.S. § 20-101 et seq. and the regulations promulgated thereunder.
- 2. Arizona Revised Statute, Section 20-230, which authorizes retaliatory taxes against foreign and alien insurers who do business in the State of Arizona, based on state, municipal and political subdivision taxes imposed on insurance, is a constitutional tax provision which provides fair notice to all insurers who intend to do business in this state.
- 3. The Department of Insurance is not estopped to assert retaliatory taxes against any foreign or alien insurer who does business in the State of Arizona.
- 4. The assessment of retaliatory taxes is not dependent upon adoption of rules pursuant to the Administrative Procedures Act, A.R.S. § 41-1001 et seq.

- 5. The assessment of retaliatory taxes by the Department is not an improper legislative delegation of authority.
- 6. The municipal taxes imposed in the State of Kentucky are taxes against insurers and are not taxes on the insureds.
- 7. The formulas used by the Department of Insurance against these Petitioners, which formulas did not accurately compute the basis for calculating retaliatory taxes in that the formulas were based on weighted averages, assumptions and invalid pro forma financial statements, are not valid retaliatory tax assessments by the Department.

#### ORDER

THEREFORE, IT IS ORDERED that all retaliatory tax assessments, which were the subject of this consolidated case, are withdrawn. The Department may reassess retaliatory taxes, if such assessments are based on accurate and valid information, calculated by a system which provides certainty in the ability to accurately calculate such taxes. Penalties and interest may not be reassessed in this case.

## C. <u>The Calculation of the Petitioners' Retaliatory Tax</u> Obligations

- 16. The National Association of Insurance Commissioners ("NAIC") has published a compendium of taxes authorized by various states (and their political subdivisions). This publication lists the taxes insurers must pay in each state, including taxes assessed by each jurisdiction's political subdivisions.
- 17. In accordance with the Legislature's mandate in A.R.S. §20-230(A), for the years at issue in this proceeding, the Department audited all foreign and alien insurers that transact in Arizona to determine whether these insurers owed retaliatory taxes to this state. The audit reflected insurers

27

28

states of domicile and the taxes payable in those states, and consisted of a comparison of the tax burden of each state with the tax levy imposed by Arizona (the "Survey Method").

- domiciled insurers to learn what taxes those insurers had paid to other states. The Survey Method accounted for the premium received by Arizona domiciled insurers from the transaction of insurance in those other jurisdictions. The consideration of premium receipts also consisted of an evaluation of whether the premium would have been subject to tax under Arizona law if the premium had been received in Arizona. Using the Survey Method, the Department used the same formula to calculate the retaliatory tax liabilities of both Georgia and Kentucky domiciled insurers.
- The Department required each Arizona domiciled insurer doing business in Georgia or Kentucky to report the respective premium receipts and the local taxes paid (broken down by jurisdiction) for each of the years 1988 through 1993. 1988 to 1991, the Department obtained this information through a special request made in 1992. For 1992 and 1993, insurers provided this information along with the annual reports filed for those years. The Department totalled these numbers, with life insurers considered separately from property and casualty insurers. The Department divided total local taxes paid by Arizona insurers by the total premiums collected by Arizona insurers to calculate the actual burden of local premium taxes on Arizona insurers in Georgia and Kentucky. Using the Survey Method, the Department applied this rate to Arizona premiums received by insurers domiciled in Georgia and Kentucky to

3

calculate whether these insurers owed retaliatory taxes to Arizona pursuant to A.R.S. § 20-230(A).

20. The Department's application of the Survey Method to Georgia domiciled insurers for this matter yielded the same tax rate from which Travelers' retaliatory tax obligations were calculated in Kentucky Central. The assessments challenged by both Travelers and First General used the following tax rates:

Tax <u>Year</u>	Kentucky Central <u>Tax Rate</u>	Docket No. 8563 <u>Tax Rate</u>
1988	2.00%	2.00%
1989	2.08%	2.08%
1990	2.13%	2.13%
1991	2.08%	2.08%
1992	2.31%	2.31%
1993	n/a	1.50%

21. The Survey Method produced the following results for the calculation of Commonwealth's retaliatory tax liability:

Tax Year	Tax Rate
1989	4.46%
1990	4.06%
1991	3.15%
1992	3.00%
1993	1.31%

22. In making assessments and reassessments against the Petitioners, the Department applied the statutes of limitations of the insurer's domiciliary state. For Commonwealth, the Department applied Ky. Rev. Stat. Ann. § 413.120(2), which prescribes a five-year statute of limitations. For Georgia domiciled insurers, the Department applied the seven-year statute of limitations prescribed by Ga. Code Ann. § 33-2-30. Because First General had originally only been assessed for 1988 and later years, the Department did not

make any assessments for 1987 for either of the Georgia domiciled companies.

23. The Department has made the following assessments and reassessments against Commonwealth:

Tax Year	Tax Assessed/Reassessed
1989	\$ 46,289.56
1990	59,519.34
1991	20,350.62
1992	61,927.86
1993	29,660.29
TOTAL	\$ 217,747.67

Consistent with the Kentucky Central Order, the Department has not assessed interest or penalties against Commonwealth.

24. The Department has made the following assessments and reassessments against First General:

Tax Year	Tax Assessed/Reassessed
1.988	\$ 189,481.05
1990	(14,631.00)
1991	99,710.95
1992	198,499.52
TOTAL	\$ 470,060.52

Consistent with the Kentucky Central Order, the Department has not assessed interest or penalties against First General.

25. The Department has made the following assessments and reassessments against Travelers:

. . .

24|| . . .

5|| · · ·

|| · · ·

1	
2	
3 4 5 6	
4	
5	10000
6	
7	П
8	ı
9	
10	
11 12	
12	
13	

15

16

17

18

19

20

21

22

**2**3

24

**2**5

26

27

Tax Year	Tax Assessed/Reassessed
1988	\$ 75,407.85
1989	71,004.65
1990	42,980.22
1991	30,088.60
1992	46,256.66
1993	46,308.90
TOTAL	\$ 312,046.88

Consistent with the dictates of the Kentucky Central Order, the Department has not assessed interest or penalty against Travelers.

### D. Discussion of the Legal Issues Presented in This Matter

26. The Petitioners' filing of a suit in superior court to challenge the Kentucky Central Order did not divest the Director of jurisdiction to determine the Petitioners' retaliatory tax liability. First, that order expressly provided that its issuance did not terminate the administrative proceedings. Until the Director issues an order finally determining the Petitioners' retaliatory tax liability for the years at issue in this matter and terminating these proceedings, this matter is not ripe for judicial review. A.R.S. §12-905(A); See A.R.S. §12-901(2) (defining an "agency decision" reviewable under the Judicial Review of Administrative Decisions Act to mean "any decision . . . which terminates the proceeding before the agency.") Second, this matter includes tax years in addition to those included within the scope of the Kentucky Central Order. Third, the parties have represented their entry into a stipulation to stay the superior court proceedings pending the resolution of this matter. However, the parties did not make this stipulation part of the record in this matter.

conducting this proceeding by virtue of the litigation over which Hon. Paul LaPrade presided. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company v. Director, Maricopa County Superior Court Cause No. C319019 ("Metropolitan Life"). That action concluded with the parties' entry into a consent judgment. Metropolitan Life, Stipulation and Consent Judgment, dated December 22, 1977. In relevant part, the stipulation provided that "the parties have compromised and settled their differences and therefore stipulate that the Court may enter the Consent Judgment attached hereto, which completely disposes of the years 1971, 1972 and 1973." The Consent Judgment resolved the issue raised by the Plaintiffs in the paragraph IV of the complaint in that action. Metropolitan Life, Complaint for Judicial Review, dated August 25, 1975.

28. In Metropolitan Life, Judge LaPrade entered a minute entry regarding questions of law raised in the Metropolitan Life Complaint for Judicial Review. The minute entry addressed only legal issues and not facts. The minute entry did not contain findings or discussion to explain or support the minute entry's basis. Further, neither the Consent Judgment nor the stipulation in support of the entry of the Consent Judgment contained any references to the minute entry. Therefore, the entry of a consent judgment precludes the application of collateral estoppel effect to the resolution of that matter. Chaney Building Co. v. City of Tucson, 148 Ariz. 571, 573, 716 P.2d 28, 30 (1986).

29. The statute applied by the Department to collect the retaliatory tax assessments at issue in this proceeding,

A.R.S. §20-230(A), is neither unconstitutionally vague nor does the statute constitute an unlawful delegation of legislative authority to the Director. The statute provides for the assessment of a retaliatory tax. The statute provides the parameters to be followed by the Department to determine another jurisdiction's tax rate. The statute specifically provides that when the Department calculates retaliatory tax assessments, the obligations subject to retaliation include both those imposed by the central government of another jurisdiction and those imposed by the jurisdiction's political subdivisions.

30. The Department's enforcement of the Legislature's mandate in A.R.S. §20-230(A) does not deny Petitioners due process. This statute puts the Petitioners and all insurers on notice of the Legislature's imposition of a retaliatory tax. The statute also places all on notice that the assessment and collection of any applicable retaliatory taxes will include consideration of all tax obligations imposed by political subdivisions of another jurisdiction. Therefore, the Department's enforcement of the Legislature's mandate to equalize tax burdens does not violate constitutional prohibitions against the enforcement of vague or ambiguous laws.

31. The Department's enforcement of the Legislature's mandate in A.R.S. §20-230(A) does not constitute an unlawful delegation of legislative authority. This law prescribes the parameters within which the Department must collect the tax enacted by the Legislature. The law does not enable the Director to choose whether to collect the retaliatory tax, or the items

25

26

27

28

subject to retaliatory tax. Instead, the law compels the Director to assess and collect a tax enacted by the Legislature.

- 32. The Department's enforcement of the Legislature's mandate in A.R.S. §20-230(A) does not constitute an unlawful The variables involved in this process of collecting the retaliatory tax assessed by the Legislature have not been left to the discretion of the Director. The variables have been defined with precision. The Director has been instructed to consider every tax obligation imposed by another jurisdiction when calculating that jurisdiction's tax burdens relative to Arizona. Every insurer, whether domestic or otherwise, may independently verify the Director's results and conclusions. The calculation contains no subjective elements. The variables involved are not subject to definitional dispute. Further, the formula used by the Department represents a simple mathematical exercise. The application of this formula to execute an already prescribed dictate of the Legislature does not transform the formula selected by the Department into a rule.
- agency statement of general applicability that implements, interprets or prescribes law or policy . . . . " A.R.S. §41-1001(17). This Department's enforcement of the retaliatory tax law represents the execution of the Legislature's mandate.

  No law has been implemented. The enactment of A.R.S. §20-230 implemented Arizona's Retaliatory Tax Act. No interpretation has occurred. The law requires retaliation against all taxes imposed by another jurisdiction, including taxes imposed by a jurisdiction's political subdivision. The challenged assessments

and the formula used to calculate the assessments comply with the law's requirements. Finally, the assessment formula does not represent a prescription of the applicable law because the law clearly establishes the confines of the tax.

- 34. The formula used by the Department to carry out the Legislature's directive under A.R.S. §20-230 incorporates only the variables prescribed in the statute. Without employing any subjective elements, this formula allows the Department to compare the tax burden faced by Arizona insurers in other jurisdictions to the burden faced by insurers from other jurisdictions in Arizona.
- ass. The Director's decision not to terminate the earlier proceedings in Kentucky Central and to instruct the Department to reassess retaliatory taxes against the Petitioners did not constitute a rejection of the Survey Method. The issues raised in Kentucky Central involved different assessments involving insurers from several jurisdictions in a consolidated hearing process in which more than one formula had been applied to calculate each insurer's retaliatory tax obligation. The Survey Method used to finally resolve this matter represents the Director's determination that the uniform application of this formula satisfies the Legislature's prescription.
- and publication of results does not support the assertion that the assessments at issue in this proceeding violate the Kentucky Central Order. The certainty sought by the Director with his direction that the assessments at issue be recalculated has been achieved. The figures used to calculate the assessments are all

3

public information capable of being verified by the Petitioners and any other interested person. The Director also rejects the Petitioners' characterization of the assessments as "retroactive." Instead, the assessments represent the application of the Legislature's prescribed formula to these Petitioners in accordance with already existing historical and antecedent facts.

- 37. Commonwealth urges that the application of the uniform Survey Method to develop the formula used to calculate its retaliatory tax obligation yields a skewed result. In support of this argument, Commonwealth contends that Kentucky municipalities may only assess taxes against the first year premiums received in a policy's first year but not renewal premiums. Thus, Commonwealth argues that the inclusion of its entire premium receipts to calculate its retaliatory tax obligation results in an overstatement of the premium subject to retaliation.
- 38. In making this argument, Commonwealth appears to have assumed that the formula used by the Department to calculate Commonwealth's retaliatory tax liability accounted for the first year premium issued differently for Arizona companies than for Commonwealth. Commonwealth's premium receipts have been treated and considered in the same fashion as Arizona domiciled insurers' premium receipts have been treated.
- 39. If any skewing occurs under the Survey Method, the skewing leads to an understatement of the tax burden faced by Arizona's domiciled insurers. Under Kentucky law, if a municipality imposes any tax, this tax can be imposed against

0

.

3

5

first year premium. If an insurer has no first year premium, no tax would be imposed, regardless of whether the insurer receives renewal premium. The Survey Method calculates Kentucky's municipal tax rate based upon total premium receipts, placing municipal taxes in the numerator (imposed only on first year premium) and all premium in the denominator (first year plus renewal premium). To the extent that Arizona insurers receive any renewal premium in Kentucky, those receipts will decrease the calculated impact of Kentucky's overall municipal tax rate. The application of this formula to all of Commonwealth's Arizona premium (first year plus renewal) results in the application of equalized tax burdens upon insurers from Kentucky transacting business in Arizona.

- 40. The parties have stipulated to the premium subject to retaliation for Travelers. As pointed out by the parties, a computational error in the application of the formula to Travelers' premium occurred. The occurrence of this error, which has since been remedied, does not constitute a defect in the retaliatory tax assessment and mechanism.
- 41. Petitioners' challenge the application of different statutes of limitation to calculate their retaliatory tax liabilities. The Department seeks to impose the applicable period limitations from the state in which each Petitioner is domiciled. In support of this position, the Department urges that the choice of law analysis applicable to retaliatory tax obligations requires the application of a burden equal to the burden faced by Arizona insurers face: a five year period of limitations in Kentucky and a seven year period of limitations in

3

Georgia. If the Department were to apply Arizona law rather than the law to which Arizona insurers are subject in the Petitioners' domiciliary jurisdictions, no period of limitations would be applicable. Arizona law prescribes no period of limitations for the collection of premium taxes on retaliatory taxes. A.R.S. §12-550.

- 42. The Petitioners urge that the application of different limitations periods denies them equal protection under the Arizona constitution. The Petitioners have not articulated how the application of a period of limitations more advantageous than A.R.S. §12-550 constitutes a denial of equal protection. Further, the Department's treatment of these differently situated Petitioners in a manner that serves to equalize the burdens faced by Arizona insurers in the Petitioners' domiciliary jurisdictions serves the purpose articulated by the Supreme Court in Pacific Mutual.
- abused its discretion and acted in an arbitrary and capricious manner through the application of different limitations periods to each of the Petitioners. In another context, the Department has been instructed to apply the due date prescribed by an insurer's domiciliary state to determine when a tax is due.

  Pacific Mutual, 97 Ariz. 18, 23, 396 P.2d 253. Incidentally, the application of statutes of limitations does not serve to create liabilities. Rather, the operation of a limitations period serves to extinguish liabilities. This result follows from the Legislature's directive "to give 'even handed treatment' in accordance with the design and purpose of A.R.S. §20-230.

Pacific Mutual, 97 Ariz. at 22-23, 396 P.2d at 253. Director therefore rejects Petitioners' challenge to the application of the Georgia and Kentucky statutes of limitation to these proceedings.

#### Ε. Conclusions Regarding the Petitioners' Outstanding Retaliatory Tax Liability

- 44. Petitioners Commonwealth Life Insurance Company, First General Insurance Company, and The Travelers Indemnity Company of America received notice of this proceeding as prescribed by A.R.S. §§20-163 and 41-1061.
- 45. The Director has jurisdiction over this matter pursuant to A.R.S. §§20-142 and 20-230.
- 46. For the years at issue in this proceeding, Commonwealth owes \$217,747.66.
- 47. For the years at issue in this proceeding, First General owes \$473,060.52.
- For the years at issue in this proceeding, Commonwealth owes \$217,747.66.
- For the years at issue in this proceeding, Travelers owes \$312,046.88.

25

26

27

28

ORDER

#### IT IS ORDERED:

- 1. Within 35 days from the date of this Order, the following retaliatory tax obligations shall be paid to the Department:
  - a. Commonwealth Life Insurance Company \$ 217,747.66.
  - b. First General Insurance Company \$ 473,060.52.
  - c. The Travelers Indemnity Company
    of America \$ 312,046.88.

EFFECTIVE this 8th day of March, 1995.

CHRIS HERSTAM
Director of Insurance

GREGORY . HARRIS

Chief Administrative Law Judge

### NOTIFICATION OF RIGHTS

The aggrieved party may request a rehearing with respect to this Order by filing a written petition with the Administrative Law Division within 30 days of the date of this Order, setting forth the basis for such relief pursuant to A.A.C. R4-14-114(B).

The final decision of the Director may be appealed to the Superior Court of Maricopa County for judicial review pursuant to A.R.S. §20-166.

1 COPY of the foregoing mailed/delivered this 8th day of March, 1995, to: 2 Gay Ann Williams, Deputy Director 3 Charles R. Cohen, Executive Assistant Director Gary Torticill, Assistant Director 4 Kelly McKay, Deputy Assistant Director Brian Stephan, Auditor 5 Department of Insurance 2910 N. 44th Street, Suite 210 6 Phoenix, Arizona 85018 7 Patrick Irvine Assistant Attorney General 8 1275 W. Washington Phoenix, Arizona 85007 9 Michael E. Hensley 10 Jones, Skelton & Hochuli 2901 N. Central Ave. 11 Suite 800 Phoenix, Arizona 85012 12 13 14 Chris Crawford 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27